

## “A Renewed Vision”

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Texts: Luke 16: 19 – 31 & John 19: 17-19

I've been thinking a lot lately of what just how far we've come. Since the turn of 1900, mankind has obtained more knowledge about the world than ever before in his history. We have technology that would astound the heroes of the Bible. I often wonder how Peter, James, and John would have used things like television and the internet. I imagine world wide church services with thousands upon thousands be saved every night.

I often think back about 25 years ago, to the services we had at church. I remember nights where the preacher didn't get to preach because all the time was used by the folks giving testimonies. I remember folks like Barb Williams waving her hanky in the air while giving a long shout out of praise and worship. I remember folks having the Holy Spirit just settle down upon them and getting up shouting and praising the Lord. I recall Earl J Rogers running the backs of the pews one night without missing step. If I would not have seen it I would not have believed it. I remember folks shouting and praising the Lord. I remember it being loud. I remember it being energized. I remember.

It seems the last few weeks I had a single thought on my mind. And then about a week and a half ago while in our nation's capital I had another thought given to me. When I realized the two thoughts went together, this is what came out. I will forewarn you right now that some of you may just get offended at me for what you are about to read, and that's okay. I will address you as if this is the last time I will ever get the chance. I won't be sharing a new revelation, or some new aspect of the scriptures; I'll just be reminding you and me about some old visions.

Last year we spent some time renewing our vision of prayer. I think we needed it. I think the Church itself as of Body of Christ would benefit from a renewed vision of prayer. After all, without prayer one cannot touch the throne room of Heaven. We've spent the last few months renewing our vision of Heaven. Again I think we needed it. The Church itself as of Body of Christ would benefit for a renewed vision of prayer. Tonight I think we need to renew another vision, one that we don't like to talk about. One that makes us uncomfortable. One that we would just rather let Brother Preacherman worry about.

### LUKE 16: 19-31

19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the

rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

There are a lot of people who don't believe Hell is real. You can tell by the way they live their lives. You can tell by the way they talk. You can tell by the clothes they wear; by the television shows they watch. The church has almost forgotten about it. When was the last time you heard a real fire and brimstone sermon? The Bible talks about Hell as a real place. Jesus talked about Hell as a real place. Why don't we talk about Hell as a real place? Have we forgotten just what we are saved from?

The most frequently used word for Hell, (occurring twelve times), in the New Testament for the place of future punishment is Gehenna or Gehenna of fire. This was originally the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the filth and dead animals of the city were cast out and burned; a fit symbol of the wicked and their destruction. Hell is described as a lake of fire. Isaiah 5:14 says "Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure...".

Revelation 12: 7-10 says,  
"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

I believe from this verse God tells us where Hell is located; it is in the center of the earth. Satan will be cast out of heaven into the earth. I believe the reason we have earth

quakes more now than ever before, is Hell is enlarging herself to accept those who rejected God. I could be wrong. It doesn't really matter. What matters is telling our loved ones about Jesus so they don't have to take up residence in a place called Hell. Unless I get a renewed vision of Hell, I'm not going to have the burden for the lost that I need to have.

The Bible tells me that Hell is a place of torment; a place pain and suffering; a place where there is weeping and wailing and the gnashing of teeth; a place of thirst; a place where one will crave, desire, be desperate for one solitary drop of water. It's a place where one's flesh will burn but be not consumed; a place where the worm will crawl on you but not be harmed; a place where the condemned will remember the lost opportunity for avoid going to Hell. Hell is a place of darkness where they cannot see their surroundings; a place of vision where they can see into heaven; a place of screaming, where the only noise you will ever heard will be you own screams of anguish, and of those who are around you, but you cannot see them.

Hell is a real place where you have no one whom loves you, and place where you have no one to love. It's a place where those who take residence there will cry out for mercy and not find it. It's a place where those whom reside there where will plead for grace and find it already passed them by. Hell is a place where the inhabitants will long for one more chance to surrender their hearts and lives to Jesus Christ, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and will never obtain it. Hell is a place where they will cry out "SAVE ME OH GOD!" only to never hear a reply.

Today on the canvass of your mind I want you to paint a picture. I want you to take a piece of paper and write the name of the one person you want to see saved more than anyone else. I know we all have more than one person in our lives, if you can't pick just one write them all down. Now close your eyes as you hold your names and walk through Hell with me.

As we enter supernaturally protected by God's grace, you see your loved one, but they cannot see you. There they are in the darkness screaming, "why, oh why didn't I accept Jesus when I had the chance". Flames leap off their bodies, dancing upwards as they scream in pain and anguish. You hear them plead for one drop of water to cool their tongue, the same tongue they used to deny God in this life. No water is given. Suddenly they let out a long yell, "Oooohhhhhh God... have mercy me!" No mercy comes. You can see the worms crawling over their body, and there is nothing you do. The flames never stop. The heat is so intense that you can barely breathe.

They scream out, "Doesn't anyone love me? Doesn't anyone care?" No answer. Just flames. Just torment. Just thirst. Just suffering. Just pain. No love. No mercy. No joy. No rest. No peace. No water. No cool breeze. No friends. No loved ones. There in

this pit of suffering forever and ever will the lost be. WE NEED A RENEWED VISION  
OF HELL!

I have loved ones that I have praying for a long time now. If they don't give their lives to Jesus, they will go to Hell. Oh Lord renew my vision, so I will seek their salvation. If I ended this writing right now, you have more than enough reason to call upon Christ, but there's more to this story, to this vision.

I recently went to Washington DC with my family. We made it point to go visit Arlington National Cemetery. We wanted to make sure our children saw the graves of those whom have died to ensure their freedom. There we walked around the graves of those who fought and died. We saw the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and guards that diligently stand post night and day, everyday. We saw the other memorials as well. We saw the war memorial for WWII. We saw the Washington Monument. We saw the Jefferson Memorial, and the Lincoln Memorial. We saw the memorial for Vietnam, and that's the one that struck me.

It had all sorts of items where people have come to visit a name etched on the memorial wall. I thought about all the sacrifice that took place so I can stand in my church, on a street corner, or in the park and proclaim God's Word. And at that moment God showed me something.

John 19: 17-19

"17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS."

Of all the men and women that have fought for me, no one cared like Jesus does when He fights my battles. Of the men and women that have fought and died for their country, only Jesus died for my sins. Of all those that made the supreme sacrifice, Only Jesus' sacrifice can save men and women from eternal Hell. Only Jesus allowed Himself to suffer the cross for you. Only Jesus allowed Himself to be slapped and spit upon for our sins. Only Jesus allowed Himself to be whipped to the point of where His flesh was nearly gone, so you and I would not have to pay the price of our sins, and end up in Hell. Only Jesus hung of a rugged cross to shed His blood so you and I would not have to. Only Jesus died and rose again to bring us salvation. Jesus lives today, and offers us salvation so that we can go to Heaven and not Hell. It wasn't a soldier. It wasn't a political leader. It wasn't a good man. He was and is the only Son of God.

We need to take that message to our lost. They need to hear that they will die and go to hell unless they trust in Jesus for salvation. They need to hear from us the message of

Heaven, the message of Hell, and the message of the Cross. We need to renew our visions of hell. We need to renew our visions of the cross. We need renewed. We need revival. We need to see souls saved. I do anyway. And not just any souls, the souls of my loved ones; the souls of my friends. I would guess that you need it too.

How often do we sacrifice our favorite TV show to read God's word? How often do we invite someone who is lost to church? How does God see our efforts in reaching the lost? It scares me to think the God might just see my efforts as a Lukewarm attempt to reaching Lukewarm people.

God help us to renew our vision of Hell. Help us to renew our vision of the Cross. Help us to renew our desire to serve You.